

Florida's Charter Schools News

2009 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools

The Department of Education would like to congratulate the **City of Pembroke Pines Charter Middle School (West and Central)** for being designated one of the 2009 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools.

The No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement to high levels. The schools are selected based on one of two criteria:

Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance to high levels on state tests; or

Schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests or in the case of private schools in the top 10 percent of the nation on nationally-normed tests.

**Each state—not the federal government—sets its own academic standards and benchmark goals.*

Under No Child Left Behind, schools must make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading (language arts) and mathematics.

Congratulations to the administrators, staff, and students on a job well done!



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2008-2009 Charter School Annual Accountability Report

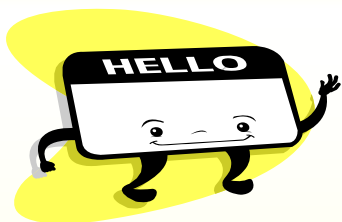
The due date for charter schools that operated during the 2008-2009 academic year to complete the annual accountability report and attach a copy of their Independent Financial Audit Report is November 2, 2009. The due date for districts to complete the reports is December 18, 2009.

Any questions or concerns can be e-mailed to CharterSchools@fldoe.org.



FLORIDA'S
CHARTER
Schools

Charters – Not just another public school!”



The annual **Florida Charter School Conference** will take place **November 16-18** at the **Double-Tree Hotel at the Entrance to Universal Orlando**. This year's event hints at something out of the ordinary and promises to be a conference to remember.

School board members, administrators, teachers and stakeholders who have attended past conferences know the schedule may be ordinary, but the program is extraordinary with high-quality presentations. The exhibit hall has the standard rows of booths, but is packed full of excellent exhibitors ready to help you succeed.

The Program Committee reviewed over 70 applications to present during the conference's seven breakout session time slots. It was narrowed down to a mix of best practices in curriculum and instruction, Department of Educa-

tion information and "how to" presentations. Please go to <http://www.charterschoolconference.com/sessions.php> to see the list of presentations.

A new element in the program is a school showcase. Several charter schools submitted and five were selected to showcase why their schools are "not just another public school." Find out how they developed their schools' specialties while serving the needs of their student populations.

Need more knowledge-gaining opportunities? Then head over to the exhibit hall. It is packed with companies ready to help you find the right solution for your school. Start planning what booths to visit by going to <http://www.charterschoolconference.com/exhibits.php> for the list of exhibiting companies.

Consider being part of this central event for the charter school community. It provides an amazing opportunity to network with colleagues from across the state and national leaders in this fast-growing sector of education.

Online registration is available at <http://www.charterschoolconference.com/registration/> until October 30. After that date, only on-site registrations will be accepted.

With you there, this event is sure not to be just another conference!

The Florida Charter School Conference would like to thank its partners for their support:

- Florida Education Foundation
- ACH of America
- Charter School Associates
- School Financial Services
- Florida Center for Instructional Technology
- Promethean
- Audio Enhancement
- Signature Products

Please stop by their booths to see how they can help your school.

For more conference information, please visit <http://www.charterschoolconference.com>. See you in November!



Staff Spotlight featuring Mrs. Helen Giraitis



Helen Giraitis joined the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice in September as the new Charter School Program Grants Director. Ms. Giraitis comes from Texas where she worked in education for fifteen years. She coordinated statewide discretionary research grants and developed reporting systems to support public community and technical college institutional effectiveness. A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, Ms. Giraitis wrote her master's thesis about the formative years of public charter schools in Texas. Over the past eight years, she has also consulted with homeless service agencies in Austin and has written successful federal, state, and private foundation grants to support capital campaigns, program development, and operations.

Students Celebrate Unique Occasions with Exciting Enrichment Activities

Throughout the first month of school, Orlando Science Middle School students have been busy learning while engaging in several exciting celebrations. The students, families and staff at this charter school have observed Grandparent's Day, Constitution Day and Hispanic Heritage month.

Grandparent's Day



Orlando Science Middle School organized a special event for Grandparent's Day on Monday, September 14, 2009. Everyone who attended enjoyed a wonderful dinner and an assortment of desserts. Several students shared personal stories about their grandparents, while others sang songs they had written or dedicated. The turnout was wonderful, and everyone enjoyed celebrating their grandparents and special guests. This was an important activity for the students because they can learn so much from their grandparents. Spending time with grandparents can impart wisdom, knowledge and a love for heritage. We look forward to honoring our grandparents with this event again next year.

Constitution Day

On Thursday, September 17th, 2009, Orlando Science Middle School observed Constitution/Citizens Day. The celebration involved student speeches as well as a beautifully harmonized singing of the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." This event of observance allowed for participants to display their appreciation for our governing body. Moreover, it permitted all to not only learn more about history but to recognize the importance of the values that are in place.



Hispanic Heritage Month



September through October we are also observing Hispanic Heritage Month. During this month students are researching Latin American countries, completing enlightening projects, and learning the importance of the Hispanic culture. Teaching about the contributions of Latinos can help to build the self-esteem and the pride of those who identify themselves as Hispanic descent. These lessons can also bring an awareness of the diversity we value in the state of Florida. Orlando Science Middle School and students in the Spanish Class are organizing a special event called Celebración de la Hispanidad to wrap up this month long celebration on Tuesday, October 20, 2009. There will be student presentations, Hispanic food and music.

Charters in the News

Charters in the news is dedicated to charter schools in Florida doing great things for their students, staff and community. Links to articles found in different newspapers throughout the state will be featured in this section.

The first school to appear in this section is RCMA Wimauma Academy. Click on the following link to read about the charter school:

http://www.observernews.net/artman2/publish/Top_Stories/An_A_school_in_an_unlikely_place.shtml.

2009 Conferences/Workshops

Date(s)	Conference/Workshop	Location	Contact Information
October 28-31	Florida Association of School Psychologists 2009 Annual Conference	Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront, St. Petersburg, FL	http://www.fasp.org/Conferences/Annual_Conference.html
October 29-31	Florida School Counselor Association 2009 Annual Convention	Renaissance Orlando Resort at Seaworld, Orlando, FL	http://www.flaschoolcounselor.org/
November 16-18	2009 Florida Charter School Conference	DoubleTree Hotel at the Entrance to Universal Orlando, Orlando, FL	http://www.charterschoolconference.com/
November 17-19	Florida School Choice Summit	DoubleTree Hotel at the Entrance to Universal Orlando, Orlando, FL	http://guest.event.com/EVENTS/Info/Summary.aspx?i=9843b2aa-c90e-45f5-819f-558bc9b0ece9
November 19-21	Florida Counseling Association 60th Anniversary Convention	Doubletree Miami Mart/Airport Hotel and Exhibition Center, Miami, FL	http://www.flacounseling.org/index.cfm

S C H O O L



Florida Department of Education

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

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School Choice Hotline:
1-800-447-1636

www.floridaschoolchoice.org

The Charter School Review Panel will meet on November 12, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. in room 1706 Turlington Building, Tallahassee, Florida.

The 2009 Dissemination Grant has been released. For information about this RFP, please visit our website at http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/

Technical Assistance is Available

Charter school staff is available to provide technical assistance or assist with any questions you may have. If you need assistance, please contact staff via telephone at 850-245-0502 or via e-mail at Charterschools@fldoe.org.